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CONTENTS.	PAGE 141-144
The Contagion of Militarism—The Case of Chile and Argentina —The Twelfth Mohonk Arbitration Conference—Platform of the Twelfth Annual Lake Mohonk Conference on International Arbitration.	141-14
EDITORIAL NOTES	144-145
The Congress of Nations - Gentlemen, not Shooters.	
Brevities	145-146
GENERAL ARTICLES:	
Letters to the Editor	146-147 147
Mr. Carnegie on Reduction of Armaments	147-148 148-150
A Common International Consciousness and a Common Inter-	
national Life. By Rev. Lyman Abbott, D. D	150-152
The Triumphs of Peace. By Cardinal Gibbons The United States Should Take the Lead in Limitation of Arma-	152–153
ments. By Justice David J. Brewer	153-154
Work Among College Men and Women. By Dr. W. H. P. Faunce	155-156
Constitutional Safeguards Against War. By Dr. Ernst Richard,	156-158
What the Last Year Has Won for Us. By A. B. Farquhar	158-159
The Selection of Arbitrators. By Stephen H. Allen	159-160
The British National Peace Congress	160-161
PAMPHLETS RECEIVED	16
International Arbitration and Peace Lecture Bureau	161

The Contagion of Militarism — the Case of Chile and Argentina.

One of the worst aspects of militarism is its contagiousness. It spreads like an evil disease. One nation cannot be affected by it without its neighbor becoming infected. If one or two nations desire to escape it they find it, or think they find it, practically impossible to do so without the coöperation of their neighbors. The situation is rendered all the worse when, as is now the case, all the nations are near neighbors to one another.

The militarism of the time is, therefore, practically universal — or rapidly tending to become universal. Even the small nations seem incapable of keeping out of it, though they thereby probably increase the danger of their destruction. Switzerland, though neutralized, and maintaining no standing army, keeps up a system of citizen soldiery and universal military training which costs her even more per capita than is spent by the great powers on their vast standing armies. The Netherlands, Belgium and Denmark, though not much is generally said about their armaments, are quite as active in their preparations for defense as Switzerland. They are always the victims of fear of their big armed neighbors. Our own country, though geographically situated so as to be absolutely impregnable, has yielded to the pressure of European militarism and is now building more war vessels than

any other power.

These reflections have been called forth by certain reports coming to us for the last six or eight weeks from South America. According to these reports Chile and Argentina intend, as soon as the five years' treaty between them expires, again to commence increasing their navies. If the reports are correct, this contemplated action is most regrettable. What these two progressive South American nations did in settling their long-standing boundarydispute by arbitration and in agreeing to make a substantial reduction in their armaments for a period of five years, was an event of the first importance, unique in the history of nations. It has been universally lauded, and cited as an example to be followed by the other nations. It has had extraordinary influence in promoting arbitration and peace sentiment throughout the civilized world. It has advanced the honor of the two nations to an unprecedented height, and also materially promoted their industrial and commercial prosperity.

There is not the least doubt, again, that their security has been as great, or even greater than it was before they reduced their armaments. All the nations have appreciated their action and respected them for it. What they ought, therefore, to do, is to plan to renew their treaties of arbitration and of limitation of armaments when they expire a year and more hence. Their experiment has been altogether successful, and they ought not under any considerations to go back to "the weak and beggarly elements" from which they delivered themselves. The world has a right to expect something better of them. The renewal of their rivalry in armaments will inevitably become an intense and bitter one, the evil effects of which on their welfare

can be only vaguely foreseen.

We cannot yet believe that the men at the head of affairs in the two countries, the same men we think that brought to a successful issue the peace negotiations of four years ago, will willingly allow such a disaster to befall their countries. We are well aware of the distrust toward our own country which has sprung up in South American countries, and of an uneasy feeling, especially among Brazilians, towards Germany. But there is no real ground in either case to justify a return to the policy of